

Use common sense to avoid insect, spider bites

With the summer weather, insects and spiders have become more prevalent, and outdoor activities make us more vulnerable to bites and stings.

You can often see spiders spinning their webs and crawling from place to place. However, there are situations in which spiders and their webs are not as visible, and in these cases, you need to be especially careful. Depending on the type of spider, a bite can be serious.

Preventing bites by spiders and insects calls for simple, common-sense measures. When working in enclosed areas such as crawl spaces, ensure that you are wearing protective clothing, including long sleeves tucked into gloves, long pants tucked into boots, and coveralls or a jacket with a hood. Rubber bands over pant legs and sleeves will minimize the possibility of a spider's running up a sleeve or pant leg in a confined situation.

It's also wise to wear gloves when you work outdoors in potential habitats such as rock gardens. Don't put your bare hands in places where you don't have clear visibility, as spiders and insects could be hiding there.

When indoors, you should shake all clothing thoroughly after it has been hanging or lying in a spider- or insect-inhabited building. Gloves, shoes and boots should also be checked before you wear them, and exercise caution when moving boxes or other objects that have been undisturbed for some time.

These precautions apply at home and in your garage as well as at work. You may also invest in spider traps available at many home-improvement stores.

To avoid injury when working outdoors, take the following measures:

- Wear protective clothing to limit exposed skin. For example, wear long pants when hiking or mowing the grass, gloves while gardening and shoes or sandals.
- Wear white or light-colored clothing; dark and yellow clothing and flowery designs are more likely to attract insects.
- Use unscented deodorant and rinse off perspiration after vigorous exercise. Insects are attracted to the scent of deodorants and perspiration. Avoid any strong-smelling perfume, cologne, hair preparations or lotions, as insects may be attracted by the smell. Use insect repellants.
- Cover food and drinks at outdoor events as much as possible. The smell of food is a strong attraction for insects. Don't forget to cover garbage as well.

For further information, or if you have any questions, contact Eric Staiert at 376-2354. If you have an insect problem in your workplace, call 376-PEST. ■